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Viewing cable 08CANBERRA4, U/S BURNS AT 12/5 TSD SOM - AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN,

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08CANBERRA4	2008-01-03 04:49	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Canberra

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/ed/article1541098.ece>

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CANBERRA 000004

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/03/2032

TAGS: PREL AF IN PK AS

SUBJECT: U/S BURNS AT 12/5 TSD SOM - AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, INDIA

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Classified By: Charge Dan Clune, Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

SUMMARY

¶11. (C) Summary: Under Secretary Burns met with his Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) counterparts Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Secretary Michael L,Estrange and Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka December 4-5, 2007 in Canberra, Australia, at the TSD Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). The wide-ranging talks covered regional and global issues, as well as TSD initiatives. This cable is three of four and covers discussion of South Asia-related issues including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Septels report on TSD initiatives, EAP and NEA issues. End Summary.

Afghanistan: Concern about Faltering Support in NATO

¶12. (C) Secretary L,Estrange confirmed the new Australian government was committed to the long-term success of Afghanistan; they were under no illusions as to the difficulty of the challenges and were looking at options to develop further support. However, Australia was concerned about the insufficient and diminishing international commitment to Afghanistan in terms of military and development assistance, as well as the capacity of the Afghan government to maintain security and deliver assistance. He gave a critical assessment of efforts in Afghanistan, noting the training of the army was behind schedule, many in the police force were corrupt, and Pakistan,s current preoccupation with domestic political matters distracted it from dealing with insurgents along its border with Afghanistan. L,Estrange further argued the desire of the Afghan government to engage elements of the insurgency was of concern; we needed to avoid any perception of weakness. Handled in the wrong way, this situation could undermine the coalition.

¶13. (C) In spite of the dour picture he painted, Secretary L,Estrange said the Australian government was not deterred from the task at hand; in fact the new government,s commitment was even stronger perhaps than former PM Howard,s. L,Estrange expressed appreciation for the recent Dutch decision to remain in the lead role in Uruzgan province for another 24 months; he lamented that the Dutch had merely postponed their withdrawal date instead of making a commitment to condition-based rather than time-based engagement.

¶14. (C) In response to Secretary L,Estrange,s inquiry into Japanese efforts to extend legislation underpinning refueling efforts in the Indian Ocean, DFM Yabunaka claimed the Japanese government was working hard to generate public support for refueling operations. Yabunaka also highlighted Japanese work with Afghanistan,s police. He reported Japan had spent \$200 million in Afghanistan with another \$200 million in the pipeline, and it was considering adding more funding for refugees. While the Japanese were experiencing some difficulties implementing programs including the Ring Road project, Yabunaka pledged Japan,s PRT work would continue.
Qcontinue.

¶15. (S) U/S Burns agreed with Secretary L,Estrange,s assessment of the problems in Afghanistan and thanked him for

the bipartisan support for Afghanistan in Australia. On the faltering will and political commitment in Western Europe, U/S Burns said Afghanistan had become an existential crisis for NATO, at odds with the &one for all and all for one8 credo. However, he argued, the ISAF Regional Command South Ministerial meeting December 13-14 in Edinburgh offered the opportunity to keep countries in the fight. U/S Burns outlined three needs: to convince France, Germany, Italy, and Spain to work in southern Afghanistan and NATO in general to &toughen up;8 to more effectively coordinate the

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international civilian efforts; and to work more with Pakistan on the sanctuary enjoyed by the Taliban along the border.

¶6. (S) U/S Burns briefed on U.S. efforts to recruit Paddy Ashdown to coordinate international civilian efforts; he requested Australia and Japan reiterate to Afghanistan,s President Karzai and UNSYG Ban the need for a strong leader on international civilian efforts in Afghanistan. Both Secretary L,Estrange and DFM Yabunaka agreed to do so. U/S

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Burns also asked Australia and Japan to join with us in pressing Spain, Italy, and France to increase their troop contributions to operations in Afghanistan. L,Estrange noted the former Australian government had been outspoken on this issue and expressed conviction the new government would be similarly assertive once they had time to work through the issue.

Pakistan: Domestic Politics and the Fight Against Terrorism

¶7. (S) Secretary L,Estrange expressed concern about uncertainty in the political outlook in Pakistan. While we needed credible elections and the state of emergency lifted, opposition leader Sharif was recently banned from running in the upcoming elections, and it was unclear if the opposition would boycott the entire process. The second issue of concern was Pakistan,s capacity to address radicalization and take on the Taliban and al Qaida in the tribal regions, while it was focused on these domestic issues. Third, regardless of the outcome of the current crisis, Australia was concerned about internal divisions in Pakistan and how the military, which U/S Burns confirmed still supported President Musharraf, would continue to maintain security. L,Estrange argued the international community needed to engage more with Pakistan.

¶8. (S) U/S Burns noted that Deputy Secretary Negroponte,s November visit to Pakistan focused on the question of whether there was still a center in Pakistani politics. Our capacity to have an impact was limited, but we supported a moderate center if possible. U/S Burns argued the northern frontier provinces had been ungovernable for decades; the difficulties along the border negatively affected our troops in Afghanistan. However, he said, Pakistan was our number one partner in the fight against al Qaida, and we supported the Musharraf government. Therefore, what happened in Pakistan was fundamental to our national security. U/S Burns also noted we are also paying attention to the Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue; while a hoped-for movement on Kashmir had been &put on ice8 by recent developments in Pakistan, the situation was markedly better than 1998 or 2001-2002.

¶9. (S) DFM Yabunaka expressed concern about command and control of Pakistan,s nuclear arsenal. Musharraf had waited too long to resign from the military, he claimed, and made a huge mistake in confronting the Supreme Court and declaring the state of emergency. Yabunaka shared his personal judgment that Musharraf was out of touch with the rest of Pakistan. He expressed the same concern about Bhutto, QPakistan. He expressed the same concern about Bhutto,

arguing her strong positions against Musharraf were a result of her difficulties with the people.

The Rise of India as a Global Power

¶10. (S) Delivering an intelligence assessment, Australian Office of National Assessment Director General Peter Varghese said India was undergoing a historic transition, especially in regards to economic policy. Politically, while the nation had some sense of its intentions vis-a-vis China and South Asia, it had yet to articulate a strategic worldview. Much of India's future would be defined by its competitive relationship with China, which would shape its relations with the rest of East Asia. India would probably be less patient in its diplomatic relations than China, Varghese noted, but

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believed its ultimate interests lay with the forces of democracy and democratic change. India, Varghese concluded, viewed democracy as both a values-based and strategic asset.

¶11. (S) U/S Burns observed the U.S-India relationship was far more advanced in the private sector than government. India was not an ambivalent power, but one without a clear sense of global identity, with one foot still in the non-aligned camp and the other foot in the global actor camp. Burns agreed with Varghese's conclusion that India was defined by its democratic system. U/S Burns also noted the U.S.-India relationship should not be defined through the prism of China. Predicting that India would be a priority for the new U.S. president in 2009, as it had been for President Bush, Burns listed a second green revolution, energy, military-to-military cooperation, and space as areas of potential cooperation. Accordingly, the TSD members should discuss areas of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

¶12. (S) DFM Yabunaka noted he was very pleased with the evolving intelligence cooperation taking place in the TSD, said India served as an important counterbalance to China, and noted an Indian official had asked him: wasn't it true that two nuclear powers in East Asia was better than one? On the other hand, DFM Yabunaka noted India was hampered by creaky infrastructure and a glacial bureaucratic decision-making process. The pace of change, development, and improvisation was far slower in India than in China, Yabunaka said, giving the Chinese a comparative advantage.

¶13. (U) This cable has been cleared by Under Secretary Burns.

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